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DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ELA, AF/SPG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/10/2019
TAGS: PGOV PREL KPKO SU EG
SUBJECT: EGYPT DISTRESSED BY BASHIR ARREST WARRANT

Classified By: Counselor for Economic and Political Affairs
Catherine Hill-Herndon for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. Key Points

-- (C) The Government of Egypt (GOE) is "very disturbed" about the ICC arrest warrant for Sudanese President Bashir, and concerned that the warrant will have an negative effect on the situation in Darfur and CPA implementation.

-- (C) FM Aboul Gheit sent a note verbale to the P-5 asking the UNSC to hold "comprehensive and constructive discussions" on Sudan.

-- (C) Egypt believes the Government of Sudan's (GOS) expulsion of NGOs send the wrong message and is considering how to best convey this message to Khartoum.

-- (C) Egypt asked the U.S. and UNSC to call for an international conference on Sudan, which will "pressure" all sides and lead to the development of a "road map" for Sudan.

¶2. (C) Comment: The Egyptian MFA was shaken by the ICC's issuance of an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Bashir. Despite a feeling of urgency to act, the GOE still prefers a multi-lateral approach with Egypt playing a supporting role because it does not want to be embarrassed if talks fail.

ICC Arrest Warrant Irresponsible

¶3. (C) Ahmed Abu Zeid, The Egyptian MFA Cabinet advisor on Africa Affairs told us on March 8 that the GOE is "very disturbed" by the ICC's issuance of any arrest warrant against Sudanese President Bashir. He stated that it was not a "responsible way" to deal with the crisis in Sudan. Abu Zeid said that the repercussions of the warrant are "unpredictable." Egypt is concerned about the "radicalization effect" that the warrant could have on Darfur and the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

¶4. (C) Abu Zeid told us that the UNSC needs to take responsibility for Sudan. He noted that FM Aboul Gheit sent a note verbale to the P-5 asking the UNSC to hold "comprehensive and constructive discussions" on Sudan. Abu Zeid said that these discussions should not only address the implementation of Article 16 to suppress the arrest warrant, but should also address the stability of Sudan and the implications of the arrest warrant. He said that one consequence of the arrest warrant was the Government of Sudan's (GOS) expulsion of the NGOs, which he stated "sent the wrong message." Abu Zeid told us that the GOE is considering how to best convey this point to Khartoum.

International Conference on Sudan Needed

¶ 15. (C) Abu Zeid asked the USG and the UNSC to call for an international conference on Sudan. He said that Cairo wants to work with Washington to find a "positive response" to the situation in Sudan. The GOE feels that a conference is needed to "build consensus" for a "holistic approach" to Sudan including CPA implementation, the Darfur Peace Process, and humanitarian and legal issues. Abu Zeid said that goal of the conference should be the development of a "road map" for Sudan with obligations and guarantees for both the GOS and rebel groups. He told us that the GOS is not in favor of such a conference, but it is needed to "find a way out of the current situation and "pressure" all sides toward specific benchmarks.

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